

Katrina L. Anderson Written Testimony regarding Senate Bill 0165
March 5, 2013

Distinguished members of the Health Policy Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss my support for Senate Bill 0165. I have eight years of experience as a clinical ethicist, having served on the ethics committees of two well known health systems in Southeast Michigan. During my years of experience, a significant number of ethics consultations have centered on the issue of medical futility. The subject of medical futility poses a great deal of conflict and emotional distress for the patient/caregiver as well as the healthcare providers. It is a difficult conversation to have, particularly when the patient is in crisis. There are mediators for these circumstances, but interventions are generally considered after the situation has escalated to a critical point.

Trying to address futility issues on a case-by-case basis opens the gate for heightened emotion; which often leads to miscommunication, litigation, and employee burnout. A written policy can be used at an early point in care delivery to stimulate discussion, to inform the decision-maker and establish the goals of care. The National Institute of Health has recognized the patient's right to informed consent. Notification of an agency's medical futility policy is crucial for an *informed* consent of care. The caregiver will be informed and the healthcare provider will be adequately supported by the institution throughout the delivery of care. This environment lessens tension in an already sensitive situation.

The provider-patient relationship is just that—a relationship. Relationships are built on trust, respect and communication. A written medical futility policy that is provided upon request will reinforce the relationship between healthcare providers and healthcare consumers. A written policy will also contribute to the longevity of the relationship between healthcare providers and healthcare institutions. I stand in support of Senate Bill 0165 because it is a viable method of reducing emotional stress for those of us who care for patients and those of us who love them.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Katrina L. Anderson', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Katrina L. Anderson
Clinical Ethicist and Patient Advocate
Oxford, Michigan